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RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 2315  
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RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 7239  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 000051

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DPJ VP OKADA ON BILATERAL RELATIONS, DPRI, AND DPRK

REF: A. 08 TOKYO 1051  
[1](#)B. 08 TOKYO 3435  
[1](#)C. 08 TOKYO 3102  
[1](#)D. 08 TOKYO 2976  
[1](#)E. 08 TOKYO 1641  
[1](#)F. 08 TOKYO 2808  
[1](#)G. 08 TOKYO 3387  
[1](#)H. 08 TOKYO 1517  
[1](#)I. 08 TOKYO 2508  
[1](#)J. 08 TOKYO 1657  
[1](#)K. 08 TOKYO 3405  
[1](#)L. 08 TOKYO 2376

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer; Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Opposition DPJ VP Okada assured the DCM January 6 that his party would act very differently in government than it has in opposition. Okada said that DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa would completely change stripes after an election and that the party would not appoint members of its current "Next Cabinet" to an actual DPJ-led government. On DPRK policy, Okada stated that while abductions and denuclearization are both important for Japan, the two issues needed to be delinked and denuclearization given the priority. Okada characterized the DPJ's official position on the relocation of Futenma MCAS as "irresponsible," adding that revising the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) plan is not a major priority for the party. Okada expressed strong opposition to reinterpreting Japan's constitution to allow for collective self-defense, but said that Japan should be able to defend U.S. military assets and bases in Japan under the current interpretation. Okada reiterated his long-standing position that Japan should distance itself from any U.S. move to support Taiwan in an armed conflict with the PRC. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: While Okada's main message was that the

United States should not be overly concerned about the DPJ's pre-election policy positions, he did not articulate how the party would go about formulating a responsible and coherent set of policies after taking power given the diversity of ideologies within the DPJ. (See Ref A for a description of the different groups constituting the DPJ and Okada's factional affiliation.) On security policy in particular, Okada made clear that his views did not mesh with more conservative members of his own party. He was also reluctant to characterize DPJ President Ozawa's real policy agenda, which remains a mystery to Embassy interlocutors across the spectrum of the DPJ. Okada did signal, however, that the DPJ wants a positive relationship with the Obama Administration and appears ready to make compromises on policy -- within limits -- to make that happen. End Comment.

13. (C) Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Vice President Katsuya Okada expressed his desire to expand contacts with the incoming U.S. Administration, during a cordial January 6 dinner hosted by the Deputy Chief of Mission. Okada urged the U.S. not to focus on the DPJ's current party platform or statements made by party President Ichiro Ozawa. (See Refs B and C for a summary of DPJ security and economic concerns.) He said that Ozawa would be very different once the DPJ came to power. Okada added that an actual DPJ government would differ in personnel as well as in policies. Just before the next Lower House election the DPJ is likely to scrap its "Next Cabinet" and announce its real intended ministerial line-up, which will probably include non-political figures

TOKYO 00000051 002 OF 003

for key policy posts. Okada downplayed Ozawa's pledge to send 100 politicians into the ministries. There are already 70 Political Vice Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and similar positions in the government. The DPJ would marginally increase the number of these posts rather than displacing senior bureaucrats, Okada said.

#### Election Timing in LDP's Hands

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14. (C) Okada was reluctant to speculate on timing for the next election. He said that the DPJ could slow the legislative process, but not to the extent of forcing a dissolution of the Diet. The real variable will be unity within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). (See Ref D for background on DPJ electoral prospects.) If 17 or more LDP Lower House members break ranks on a vote that requires a two-thirds majority re-vote to overcome a rejection in the opposition-controlled Upper House, the government will collapse and an election could happen with little warning. He noted that when he was DPJ President in 2005, he was taken totally off-guard by then-Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's decision to call a snap election in response to internal LDP dissent over postal reform. That said, if Prime Minister Taro Aso can hold his party together, he will likely wait until the DPJ reaches its nadir in terms of public support to call an election. The best case for the LDP, he added, would be to elect a new leader in August and then dissolve the Diet in September.

#### DPRK Policy: Denuclearization First

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15. (C) Turning to policy, Okada said that the issue of North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens is deeply emotional for the public and something no Japanese politician can ignore. (See Ref E and F for DPJ views on DPRK policy.) At the same time, Okada noted, the nuclear issue presents a fundamental challenge to Japan's national security and should be delinked from abductions. Okada expressed support for the current Six-Party approach towards North Korea, and said that Japan should provide humanitarian aid to North Korea if it would help move the DPRK towards denuclearization. Okada commented that time is now shifting to the U.S. side. The Obama Administration will be in office for the next four, if

not eight, years. Meanwhile, Pyongyang is facing prospects of major domestic instability if Kim Jong-il's health were to fail again soon.

#### Cautious Security Approach

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16. (C) Okada downplayed media reports that the DPJ is planning major revisions to the May 1, 2006 Realignment Roadmap. (See Refs G and H for additional DPJ thinking on Alliance issues.) The issue, he continued, is simply not a major priority for the party. Okada said that the DPJ's current platform calling for Futenma MCAS units to move out of Okinawa is both "irresponsible" and unrealistic. That said, Okada commented that it may be worthwhile reviewing whether there is a real need to maintain two separate U.S. air bases on Okinawa.

17. (C) Regarding broader Alliance issues, Okada said that Japan should focus its defense policy on working with the United States in Northeast Asia rather than joining U.S.-led

TOKYO 00000051 003 OF 003

operations further afield. Okada objected to LDP efforts to reinterpret the Constitution in order to permit the exercise of collective self-defense. While the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) should be permitted to defend U.S. military assets and bases engaged in the defense of Japan, the current Constitution should not be interpreted to allow the SDF to conduct out-of-area coalition operations or defend U.S. territories. While there may be good reasons to revise the Constitution's Article 9 to allow greater bilateral operational flexibility, he continued, opening that door would inevitably lead to Japan giving itself the right to act independently of the United States. This would increase suspicions among Japan's neighbors and negatively impact on regional security. Okada allowed, however, that if there is a legitimate need to stretch constitutional interpretations, such as to allow intercepts of missiles heading for the United States, "a way can theoretically be found to do so," as was the case when Japan created the SDF.

18. (C) While Okada said he personally opposed the dispatch of the SDF for coalition operations, he advocated greater Japanese contributions to UN peacekeeping operations in places like Sudan. Nevertheless, Okada said he was against sending military forces to Afghanistan, even though coalition operations there are clearly authorized by the UN (See Refs I and J for DPJ Afghan views). The solution to the conflict in Afghanistan, he continued, must involve political accommodation with armed opposition groups through the electoral process and a withdrawal of foreign forces. The Embassy noted that Japan could play a role now in moving Afghanistan in that direction by funding security for upcoming Afghan elections and the expansion of the Afghan National Army.

19. (C) Regarding the dispatch of SDF forces for anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, Okada acknowledged that his party did not have a clear position. When asked how the DPJ would respond if PM Aso sent forces under existing authorities, Okada said he would personally oppose it but others in the party would react very differently. (See Ref K on DPJ Anti-Piracy concerns.) "As for Ozawa," he continued, "since there is a UN resolution, he will probably support it."

#### China/Taiwan

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110. (C) Okada repeated his familiar warning to U.S. officials not to ask Japan to help defend Taiwan in a conflict with the PRC. Okada asserted that U.S.-China relations would recover in a matter of years after such a war. (See Ref L for DPJ views on Taiwan.) However, it would be "60 or a hundred" years before China would restore diplomatic relations with Japan if it helped the U.S. defend Taiwan. The Embassy

cautioned that while no one in the United States or Japan wants a war with China over Taiwan, signaling to Beijing through words or actions that Tokyo would sit out any Cross-Strait conflict only decreases the deterrence value of our alliance. Okada said he understands the need to send the appropriate signals, and praised the U.S. government's efforts to prevent former Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian from moving too far towards independence.

SCHIEFFER